A HISTORY OF

Kearsley Home

CHRIST CHURCH HOSPITAL

BY

GEORGE B. ROBERTS

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200th ANNIVERSARY

THE NATION'S FIRST HOME FOR AGING WOMEN

FOUNDED 1772

KEARSLEY HOME-CHRIST CHURCH HOSPITAL

49th STREET AND MONUMENT AVENUE

PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19131

Christ Church Hospital, now called Kearsley Home, is celebrating its two hundredth anniversary; but we cannot therefore assume that it came into being all at once at the death of its founder, Dr. John Kearsley, on January 11, 1772, any more than the real independence of the United States can be said to have begun with the reading of the Declaration of Independence four years later. Rather it began with an idea in the mind of Dr. Kearsley which may have come to him from the founding in 1751 of the Pennsylvania Hospital.

For this reason some account of the life of the founder is pertinent. The facts which follow, both in his life and that of his nephew, John Kearsley, Jr. are drawn from the excellent lives of these men prepared by Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., for the forthcoming biographical dictionary of members of the American Philosophical Society which he has kindly allowed me to see.

Kearsley was baptized on June 4, 1684 at Greatham (County Durham), England, son of the Vicar, the Reverend John Kearsley. Young John studied medicine in London and in 1711 emigrated to Philadelphia and set up as a physician with considerable success. Although he did not possess a formal medical degree, he had many pupils, one of whom, Dr. John Bard, remembered that "his morose and churlish temper banished all cheerfulness and social converse from his pupils, and rendered him an unpleasant companion".

In 1719 he was elected a vestryman of Christ Church. He has been credited with being the architect of the present building, as well as of the State House and St. Peter's Church. It is certain that he was a prime mover in the building of all three, and supervised the construction of Christ Church from 1722 until its completion thirty years later. Andrew Hamilton had a share in the design of the State House and Robert Smith was the builder of the tower and steeple of Christ Church and of St. Peter's (the Church still possesses his contract); although Kearsley probably had a hand in the design of all these buildings, for he was a member of the House of Assembly from 1722 to 1740 and was a member of the Committee and present at the opening service at St. Peter's on Friday, September 4, 1761.

His first wife having died in 1747, he married a Mrs. Margaret Bond in 1748. A month later his first wife's child died, and Kearsley never had another. In this same year occurred Kearsley's controversy with Dr. Adam Thomson over the preparation of patients to receive the smallpox inoculation. This was a much more severe ordeal for the patient in those days before Jenner's discovery of the serum based on cowpox virus. Kearsley issued an insulting pamphlet; Thomson replied with more insults, but the quarrel did not last long.

Dr. Kearsley had a brother Oliver who remained in England and was also a physician. This brother had a son who came to philadelphia in the 1730's and studied with his uncle, becoming known as John Kearsley, junior. He prospered as a doctor, married and had a comfortable income, but like his uncle, he had a morose and churlish side. In 1768 he became involved in a legal dispute over the will of one of his patients, the heirs claiming undue influence. It was an unpleasant case, and the will was not admitted to probate.

A year later old Dr. Kearsley made his will. In it he left "unto my Nephew John Kearsley the sum of five hundred pounds current money of Pennsylvania....all my books which do treat of Physick or surgery.... all my instruments of surgery and all my physical drugs and medicines..."

Whether the recent lawsuit about the will, or disapproval of his ventures into business, unsuitable to a physician, caused Dr. Kearsley to so slight his nephew, the will does not show. After bequests of money, jewelry, etc. to other nieces and nephews in England, he lists his bequests to his "dear and loving wife": their house on Front Street, the furniture, "My negro man Cuff", other houses, rents and money and the rest of his books. But these are only left to her for her life. The bulk of the estate, and at her death all the rest, are left to:

> "The Rector, Churchwardens and Vestrymen of the United Episcopal churches of Christ Church and St. Peter's Church in the city of Philadelphia and province of Pennsylvania.... for the purchasing of a piece or lot of land and the building thereon an Infirmary or Alms House or Almshouses for ten or more poor or distressed women of the Communion of the Church of England...."

There follows a long list of stipulations as to how the Institution is to be run, with the express recommendation that the model to be followed is the recently established Pennsylvania Hospital.

In a codicil dated December 23, 1769, he left to his wife his "negro man Sam in the room of....Cuff, who hath departed this life" and to the Rector, Churchwardens, etc. a messuage and lot he had purchased "since the executing of my foregoing will....situate on the north side of Mulberry (now 311 Arch) Street....northward to Cherry Street, which I think a suitable place to erect an infirmary or almshouse...."

On January 11, 1772, Dr. Kearsley died after a brief illness and was buried in Christ Church burial ground. An obituary in the Pennsylvania Packet recalled his many services to the city, the church, and the province, especially his having "been borne from the Assembly to his own

house on the shoulders of the people. (This occurred during the disputed election of 1728). We hear that he has bequested several handsome legacies to the poor."

John Kearsley, Jr. lost no time in trying to get more money from his uncle's estate. He wrote to the rector of Christ Church, Dr. Richard Peters, proposing that the church allow him a fair share, and charging that the doctor had been incompetent when he made the will. The Church disallowed any compromise. Kearsley threatened to sue.

The "messuage" at 311 Arch Street was a small two-storied house. If the doctor were the experienced architect people claim, it seems strange that he would have thought it suitable for an alms house. It was out of repair and could hold at most seven persons. Because of the pending suit and the insufficient funds (due to Mrs. Kearsley's life interest), the opening was delayed.

Meanwhile John Kearsley, Jr. became a notorious Tory. His house was entered in September, 1775; he was seized and threatened with tar and feathers. In October he was arrested and sent to York where he remained, sometimes in prison and sometimes on parole, for a year. He was then transferred to Carlisle where, in October, 1777, he complained to Congress of the cold, the windows not being glazed. Before they replied, he was dead.

There was now no one to dispute the will, and old Mrs. Kearsley having died, the hospital was formally opened on April 27, 1778, in spite of the British occupation of the city, with Sarah Kidman, Susanna Hacket and Elizabeth Frazer as the first pensioners. Only two weeks later the "Mischiansa" entertained the departing British troops.

On February 21, 1781, there were nine new admissions, but a note in the register (not begun until 1844, and still preserved at the Hospital) makes clear that all but four of the new admissions were "out pensioners" and that no more than seven were living in the Hospital. A minute book of 1783 shows that the "out pensioners" received flour, sugar, tea, coffee, firewood, and three shillings four pence a week for meat.

In 1785 the building was pulled down and a more convenient one was erected on the site. It was twenty feet wide at the front and thirty-four feet in depth -- still a very small house. The pensioners moved in on December 21, but there is no record of where they stayed in the meantime.

The estate of Dr. Kearsley had amounted at his death to about $30,000. Seventeen years later the Vestry of Christ Church was presented with a rather ungrammatical letter from one Joseph Dobbins, formerly a resident of Philadelphia. He wrote as follows (the words in parentheses are inserted in an effort to make the sense clearer):

"Sheriff Hall, on Wappco
Four miles from Charleston
S.C., January 28, 1789

"To our worthy Bishop, Mr. White, to the Rev. Mr. Blackwell, and my old friend Robert Towers.

"I am now sick but, I believe, not to die at this time; and further hope to live until I can settle my affairs to my mind, and as this is a beginning, and (if) you approve my offer, it may be a part done, which I could wish was finished. There is that lot on Fifth Street, and that No. 4 from Schuylkill, with somewhere about five hundred pounds in possession of my old friend, John Drinker. The whole I leave to the use of Dr. Kearsley's bounty to the poor, distressed widdows, for a continual succession until time shall be no more; (in return for which you shall be) paying forty S(panish) M(illed) dollars every three months, brought and delivered in my hands, and not for me to run after it. The titles of the lands are with my friend, John Drinker, who I have informed by letter; and if you approve of my offer, the conveyance may be made out and executed -- the sooner the better. I expect you three to act a just part by me; and if I receive that sum (the $40.) every three months, I shall be satisfied. I shall conclude, as I am weary, and you know my mind; and subscribe myself

Yours affectionate well-wisher
JOSEPH DOBBINS

"N.B. It is my request that the money in the hands of my friend (Drinker) may not be taken from him while he gives sufficient security and pays the interest. After my death, the annuity ceases."

The vestry accepted the offer, and for fifteen years they continued to pay the $40 every quarter to Joseph Dobbins, who died in 1804 at the age of 77. "That lot on Fifth Street" brought $2,500, 126 shares of the Bank of South Carolina brought $6,000, John Drinker's note was settled for $1,325. But at this time "Lot No. 4 from Schuylkill" (the entire city block 18th to 19th and Spruce to Pine Streets) was only valued at $5,400 and the managers of the Hospital wisely decided to keep it. They called it Dobbins Square.

The receipt of this legacy and the increase in value of many of the Kearsley properties led the managers, six vestrymen of Christ Church, to erect a new building on the back of the original lot fronting north on Cherry Street (now #308). They employed William Strickland as architect, one of whose drawings now hangs in the corridor of the Hospital. The new building was sixty feet wide and is still standing, although the rear wing has been demolished and replaced with a loft building. The front block was forty feet deep with three stories and an attic (later rebuilt with a mansard to make it a full fourth story). There were twenty-four rooms to accommodate forty residents. Most of the bedrooms of the residents were in the vanished south wing. In this wing, there were no corridors, but the rooms opened off the yard, or the second or third story verandas, at the end of each of which was a privy. The matron's rooms and a dining room, kitchen, and other rooms were in the main block. Each room had its own fireplace. The building was built of brick with marble trim and cost $18,000. It was opened March 22, 1819, with Mrs. Jane Sellers as the first matron.

In 1832 Christ Church and St. Peter's, which up until then had been one parish, decided to divide. Until his death Bishop White had presided over both, with an assistant in each, but now there was a formal separation. An Act of Assembly was passed in which the property of Christ Church Hospital remained in the custody of Christ Church, but the management was entrusted to a board of six vestrymen, three from each church.

By 1850, the growth of the City of Philadelphia had progressed to the point where "Dobbins Square" was no longer merely four stakes in the woods. Accordingly, the land was surveyed, three streets were planned and the land divided into building lots. From 18th to 19th streets (renamed from Schuylkill 4th and 3rd) were laid out:- "DeLancey Place" in the center (named after a former rector of St. Peter's), "Kearsley Street" (now Cypress) and "Dobbins Street" (now Panama). The land was sold in 1854 for $123,000, and with part of the proceeds the managers bought a farm (near what is now Bala) of 126 acres from Jesse George. On this property at midday, November 18, 1856 they laid, at the southwest corner of the chapel, the cornerstone of the "New Hospital in Belmont". In it, in a leaden box, they deposited, among other things, a printed copy of Dr. Kearsley's will and a History of Christ Church by the Reverend Benjamin Dorr, its rector, who was present and made the address. Bishop Potter was also present and made a commendably short speech about Dr. Kearsley.

The project of building an institution in the country was a somewhat audacious one. Although the site now seems easily accessible, in 1856 Belmont Avenue did not exist, nor did the branch line of the Pennsylvania Railroad to Wynnefield and Bala. The main road left Lancaster Pike at

what is now 52nd Street, skirted George's Hill and passed along what is now Monument Road. From this a lane led to the George farmhouse, since 1878 the "Rabbit". There were then no "services" available outside the City.

John M. Gries, the young architect for the building, had to arrange for these services. A small stream was dammed to make a reservoir (now the Bala Golf Club pond). From it water was piped underground (so as not to freeze in winter) to a vault which still exists, in which stood a twenty foot iron mill wheel. This pumped water to a steel tank which (rusted through) is still in the tower.

The house was lighted from the beginning with acetylene gas which was formerly used in miners' lanterns. To minimize the danger of explosions, the gas was made in the existing stone building near the graveyard at a safe distance from the main house. Here water was dripped on a dry calcium carbide powder and the gas filled a small tank which floated in a pool of water as in an old-fashioned gas works.

Gries devised a system of hot-air heating employing sixteen furnaces. For these coal had to be hauled from the railroad at 52nd Street. The system was designed to furnish fresh air only, all the rooms having exhaust vents so that no air was recirculated; and it proved ruinously expensive. For the first time there was inside plumbing.

The structure of the building is fire resistant. The outside walls are of stone, the partitions of brick. Cast iron beams span the interiors from the outside walls to those of the corridors, and between the beams are shallow brick barrel vaults. The wood floors are laid on these with cement filling.

Scarcely had the building begun when the panic of 1857 produced a sharp decrease in income. However, the Managers decided to go on, and it was completed in September of 1861, two months after the battle of Bull Run. Architect Gries, who was only thirty-five, became Major of the 104th Regiment in the Union Army. Wounded at the battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia while gallantly saving the colors of his regiment, he died in June of 1862, and the Managers of the Hospital erected a tablet to his memory in the entrance vestibule of the building.

Now the bills came in. The final cost of the building was $125,602, instead of the $96,000 estimated. The plumbing had cost $4,984.25 and the gas house $2,760. Work on the driveway and grounds, the water supply and the cesspools brought the total cost to $156,101.99. Besides there was a bill of $4,278.84 for furniture, including the benches for the Chapel.

It was decided to erect temporary partitions (probably about where the elevator now is) and leave the north wing empty until further funds could make the operation of the entire building possible. The cost of maintaining a resident was now estimated at $90 per annum, instead of the previous $80.

When the building was opened, Mrs. J. C. Lewis was the matron. In February, 1864, she received a letter beginning as follows:

> "The Board of Managers of Christ Church Hospital desire to express to the Matron their views of the Principles and Practice, by which they wish her to be governed in her management of the Hospital. They regard the Institution as a Christian Family, of which she is the Head, and which she should therefore regulate exclusively on the principles of the Gospel of Christ:- in the practice of more than ordinary forbearance with infirmities, in consideration of the weakness of age and probably previous sufferings:- by the exercise of dignity with humility, and firmness with gentleness:- by an unwearied care for the temporal and spiritual needs of each member of the family, avoiding undue partiality towards any one of them. While endeavoring, in a prayerful spirit, to practice these principles herself, she should also inculcate them by precept upon the inmates, as occasion may require and as....opportunity may permit."

It was in 1876 that St. Peter's Church presented the bell that hangs at the top of the small tower at the east end of the chapel. This bell had been cast at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in London in 1702 and was brought to Philadelphia, the first church bell in the city, and hung in the first Christ Church building. When the present tower was added to the new building in 1757, a set of chimes was ordered from London, and the old bell was presented to St. Peter's which was about to be built. It was hung in a cupola on the roof, which rested on the stair tower against which the pulpit stands. In 1777, when the British were advancing on Philadelphia, this bell, together with the State House bell (a larger and later sister from the same foundry) which had now become famous by ringing for liberty, were loaded on a cart and taken for safekeeping to Allentown. After the evacuation, both bells returned to Philadelphia. In 1842 St. Peter's built a tower and purchased chimes, and the old bell was no longer used. Now it is rung on Founder's Day to commemorate the anniversary of Dr. Kearsley's death.

When the published annual reports began in 1885, the north wing was still shut off, so that the heating of three furnaces could be dispensed with. The next year the pond silted up and an artesian well

was dug with a "Rider Caloric Engine" to pump up the water. There were now funds for only forty residents. But the next year $1,300 was raised "to cheer up the house." Tiles were laid in the stair hall, a "Nativity" window was installed in the chapel in memory of Elizabeth Green, a former resident. A gardener's cottage was built costing $1,000. (It cost about the same to demolish it in the 1950's. The foundation can still be seen near the southeast corner of the building by the lane leading to the graveyard.)

In 1888 the Pennsylvania Railroad put through its line and opened the station at Bala. Two years later when Wynnefield Avenue was laid out, the Hospital was able to sell off land for building lots and the number of residents was increased to fifty.

In 1891 Mrs. Annie G. France resigned as matron and Mrs. Rebecca G. Singleton took her place. She had been acting matron since 1884, and was to continue until 1917 - thirty-three years. Dr. Service also began his work at the Hospital in 1884 and continued to be its physician for fifty years. The writer well remembers him, for, besides ushering him into the world he received Dr. Service's ministrations (chiefly calomel and castor oil) for over twenty years. Dr. Service lived on City Line west of Belmont Avenue, and would hitch the horse to his little runabout and drive to the Hospital at a moment's notice. He was a kind and sympathetic man, but complained that medicine was moving so fast that it was hard to keep up the pace.

In 1895 the number of residents had increased to fifty-eight. The next year more than $5,000 was received in legacies, and the Managers had a small stair removed and in its place installed a hydraulic elevator. This used so much water that an Otto gas engine was installed to keep up the supply, but the well proved inadequate and $674.25 was expended to bring water from the City main which had now been laid in Belmont Avenue. Soon after, Wynnefield station was opened and the building of the Park trolley brought public transportation to within a short walking distance of the house at 49th and Parkside Avenue.

In 1899, Louise Stockton in "Quaint Corners in Philadelphia" wrote of the Hospital as follows:

"One of the most pleasant features in this place is the prevalence of family life. It has happened that the Managers have several times been able to take mothers and daughters, sisters and other near relations so that little homes are set all through the great building, and there is a completeness and content preserved that is not possible when charity breaks all family ties.

not one of the Managers, must be elected by ballot. This procedure is still adhered to, but Mr. Morgan, as President of the Fidelity Trust Company, entrusted to his Company the duties of the Treasurer. Under Mr. George W. Gouder, and Mr. Richard E. Prinz of the Provident, this use of a bank as working treasurer has been continued.

As the prosperity of the twenties continued, the capacity of the house was increased to ninety-two. This would have involved using all the rooms, and was never actually achieved. At the end of 1929 there were eighty ladies and no deficit. The blow of the stock market crash was softened by a legacy from Mary A. Dobbins of $140,000 derived from the estate of her brother, Edward T. Dobbins, who had left the Hospital $10,000 in 1905. In 1931 a bequest from Sallie A. Wood amounting to $70,276.85 made possible the installation of a new electric elevator and the construction at each end of the building of the stone fire towers. These were designed by George A. Robbins, architect, and replaced two steel tubes with spiral chutes inside them installed in 1927. When some of the Managers objected that the old escapes were perfectly good, the Chairman asked for volunteers to try sliding down them. There were no takers.

At this time, the "moat" or area on the entrance side was widened and its wall lowered so as to make the rooms on the ground floor, formerly used for storage, into attractive bedrooms. The towers and other work cost about $12,000.

William White, great-grandson of the Bishop, was now Chairman of the Board. Meetings of the Managers were held at his office in the City and only the clerk from the Hospital office attended with her note-book to take the minutes. The Managers were assigned to a "visiting committee" in rotation, but few made regular visits. There was also a Superintendent, Thomas T. Stiles, who worked in an office in town, kept the books and supervised, in a general way, the running of the Institution. With his retirement, in 1933, and the employment of the Fidelity Trust as fiscal agent, the office of Superintendent could be abolished. But Mrs. Crosby, the matron who had replaced Mrs. Singleton, was never asked to the Managers' meetings.

Mr. White now called for the formation of a Ladies Committee, who were to meet at the Hospital, organize parties and entertainments for the residents, visit them and try to make the house more attractive. He pointed out that it seemed an anachronism that the running of a home for women be entrusted solely to men. Mrs. George B. Roberts was the first chairman of this committee, which undertook to organize monthly afternoon parties with entertainment and refreshments and to organize automobile outings during the summer.

In spite of the legacies received, the income of the Hospital was never sufficient to fill all the rooms, and the annual reports continued to ask for additional funds. In 1936 Mrs. Crosby was replaced by Mrs. Bartlett who was named Superintendent. Mrs. Bartlett was a registered nurse, and for the first time the Hospital had a trained nurse on duty at all times. Mr. White resigned in 1938 after having served on the Board from 1901 to 1907, and again from 1928 to 1938.

George B. Roberts, the writer of this account, now became Chairman, continuing the tradition that the Chair should alternately be filled by a Manager from St. Peter's and one from Christ Church. Mrs. Roberts resigned as Chairman of the Ladies Committee and was replaced by Miss Margaret Faulcomer who handed on the reins to Mrs. Kloman in 1941. In 1940, for the first time, the Superintendent was asked to attend the Board Meetings regularly. At the same time, the Treasurer was also requested to attend. Until now, the deliberations of the Managers had always been surrounded with the greatest secrecy. Even the annual meetings, held according to the by-laws, on the second Monday after Easter, were held in executive session, the Managers joining the Vestrymen of Christ Church and St. Peter's afterwards for refreshments. Now the annual meetings are open to "such as care to attend."

In 1944 George W. Wilkins, who had been Secretary, became Chairman. Again there was difficulty in meeting the increase in the cost of living, and the number of residents had to be reduced to sixty-five. In order to fill more vacant places a new plan of admission was set up. Under the old, or contract system, a candidate for admission had to contribute all her property to the Institution, in return for which she received a contract guaranteeing her maintenance for life. But there were many who wanted care who did not want to deprive their families of all inheritance.

The scheme was worked out gradually. Anyone with less than $15,000 in property was free to apply ("poor or distressed" was not necessarily to be interpreted as 'penniless'), and the first boarder was admitted at $80 per month. As the Department of Public Assistance began to provide for old people in need, the number of residents under the old plan began to decrease. By 1957 there were still eleven of them, compared to twenty-six whose board was paid by themselves (seventeen of these were members of a Resident's Trust Fund) or their families, thirty-two were on D.P.A. allowances or Social Security in varying amounts.

In 1945 two carved oak screens were placed in the chapel in memory of G. Brinton Roberts for whose house they had been designed by Milton B. Medary, architect of the Valley Forge Memorial Chapel.

Two Superintendents briefly followed the departure of Mrs. Bartlett in 1944. George P. Robins became Chairman in 1946 with Edwin T. P. Boone as Secretary. In 1947 Miss Marian Smith began fifteen years of active service as Superintendent.

In 1951, the bathrooms in the house, which had last been done over in 1913 by a gift of Miss Mary Dobbins, needed modernizing. This and other necessary work was entrusted to Erling M. Pederson who made complete plans of the building. These have been of great use in subsequent alterations. At this time oil burners and new boilers were installed, and it became possible to abandon the overhead railway used previously to haul coal from the delivery trucks to the bins and from the bins to the boilers. In all $95,000 was spent.

In 1952 Father George C. Ashley became Chaplain. After a series of incumbents, it was a wonderful change for the Hospital to have in its service one whose devotion approached twenty years. The Rev. Clarence E. Tobias, Jr. was appointed as his successor in July, 1972.

In 1953 a Memorial Fund was started and entrusted to Mrs. David C. Cleland. A handsome book was presented and in it were recorded gifts to the Fund and expenditures made. One of the first memorials was the planting of dogwood trees in memory of Miss Faulconer, others have been a new frontal and vestments for the chapel, new lights and a loud speaker, kneeling benches, large type prayer books and many other gifts to the chapel and the house. Mrs. Cleland is still in charge of this Fund.

In 1954 George P. Robins became Chairman with William R. Talbot as Secretary. Dr. Arnett, who had taken over from Dr. Service, retired and Dr. Henry F. Page succeeded him. From now on began a gradual increase in medical costs which worried Miss Smith, the Superintendent. The cost of drugs began to rise, and the longevity of the residents rose with it. Whereas in the past there had been many admissions of residents under seventy years old, the average age of new admissions was now well over seventy-five. Dr. Page formed a close association with the Lankenau Hospital, now established in Overbrook and much nearer than the old Episcopal Hospital. In 1970, Dr. Gordon Webster took over and maintains the association with Lankenau.

For several years, the Managers had felt that the work of running the Institution was a task not necessarily suited to six men chosen from the Vestrymen of Christ Church and St. Peter's. It was, therefore, decided to form an Operating Committee which would include women as well as men, and to let them share the work.

Already the work of the Admissions Committee had been in great part performed by a Social Worker at the City Mission, for the Managers no longer considered a medical certificate and the recommendation of a clergyman sufficient for the admission of a resident. With the difficulties of caring for the infirm, the financial problems and the need for psychological evaluation to determine how an applicant might adjust to community life, the work of the Admissions Committee had become very heavy.

In 1953 the role of the Admissions Committee was strengthened and Mrs. William R, Talbot was appointed Chairman. A very competent and enthusiastic Social Worker was engaged so that the "waiting list" was carefully scrutinized, and it was found that many applicants had been placed elsewhere and that the waiting list has become a manageable one. The Admissions Committee continues to evaluate carefully the needs of all applicants and each one is visited in her home (or place of residence) by two members of the Admissions Committee before being accepted.

In 1956, Horace Churchman became Chairman, with Mr. Talbot remaining as Secretary. A gas-driven generator was installed to provide emergency lighting in blackouts, which has repeatedly proved its value. A station wagon was bought through the great offices of Mr. Sidney Lee, but it was not until 1961 that one of its successors was moved from the gas house to a new garage built in the back drive.

In 1959 one of the Executive Committee reports expresses worry about:

> "the situation with regard to the cat population in the cellar. Two years ago your Committee descended to the catacombs and found that there were more cats than rats. We are not certain whether this healthy situation still exists, but have it on our agenda to make an inspection concerning this vitally pressing problem. If Miss Smith's cats reproduce as most cats do, the situation in the basement should be interesting.
>
> Respectfully submitted,
>
> WILLIAM R. TALBOT
> DOROTHY S. CLELAND
> J. HORACE CHURCHMAN"

Pinned to this in the file is a slip of paper bearing the words:

"Your comments will be appreciated. J.H.C."

Another slip of paper bears this reply:

> "If you continue to catnip me, I will land in Norristown, meowing as I go! Our problem today is 100,000 pigeons all building nests in our deep window sills. M.S."

Many of the annual meetings were enlivened by Miss Smith's and Father Ashley's reports of doings and sayings of the members of the household. These were always kept strictly anonymous as the things of "Miss X", "Mrs. Y", or "Miss Z". The Board was highly amused by the account of the twelve foot snowman built by Miss Smith in the driveway circle which Melvin Patterson, for many years the building's maintenance man and engineer, called "A magnificent achievement. When Miss Smith tackles anything, it sure gets done."

But it was not all play and no work at Christ Church Hospital. One of Miss Smith's reports ends as follows:

> "When a work is worthwhile as ours in this Home there will always be ways of solving the problems whether they be financial or on the human side."

At the Annual Meeting in 1960 Mr. Talbot, for the first time, took the Chair. At this meeting Dr. Page reported as follows:

> "It was interesting to note that several of our ladies who were mentally ill were successfully rehabilitated by kindly attentive nursing care."

Miss Smith's report contains the following:

> "One resident who needs very constant nursing care gets furious when the Doctor tells her that she looks better. But she said: 'I get awful mad at that man, but SECRETLY I call him Prince Charming'."

Since 1958, a spritely publication called the "C.C.H. News" had been appearing with almost quarterly regularity. The Editor was a resident, Miss Fanny L. M. Hawkins, who not only wrote articles for it herself, but persuaded Mrs. Crane, the Board's Chairman of Publicity, Miss Smith and others to contribute. For many years it flourished, then was given up. Now, in 1971, a new publication has begun, the "Kearsley Newsletter", to which we wish a comparable success.

Another activity is the White Elephant Shop, a visit to which might turn up things made by the residents or things given to it. The money raised, which in some years has exceeded $900, is used for the benefit of such residents as need it.

These are not the only activities of the residents. The Altar Guild, the Library Committee, the Hostess Committee which arranges to have someone at the front door all the time to receive visitors, and the important Residents' Council are always active.

As the old building approached its 100th year in 1961, Dr. Page began urging the Managers to face the growing need for modern facilities for care of invalids, due to the rising age of the residents. Now they numbered sixty-two and their average age was over eighty. A legacy of $50,000 was received from the Estate of Sarah E. Russell, which was put aside to begin the fund for a new infirmary building.

The Board asked the former Chairman, George Roberts, now a member of the Operating Committee, to prepare plans for a building to house twenty patients, with rooms for staff and services. With the close cooperation of Miss Smith and the Board, a fireproof wing was designed and approved by the various City Departments.

In February 1961 a brochure and a letter were sent out by Mr. Churchman and Mr. Talbot asking for contributions. The generous response to this appeal, especially a contribution from Mrs. H. S. Valentine, made possible the beginning of the work by J. S. Cornell and Son, builders, after Bishop Hart had broken ground for it on April 10, 1961.

By the end of January 1962 the building was complete, having cost $118,802.72 for construction plus $62,497 for heating, air-conditioning, plumbing and drawings.

A service of dedication was held in the chapel on February 28, 1962, conducted by Father Ashley, following which the congregation marched through the ground floor and the connecting passage into the new building which was named Kearsley House in memory of the founder.

Though she had worked so hard on the new building, Miss Smith felt that she must retire in November, 1961. There then followed three quick changes in Superintendents. Fortunately Mrs. Eleanore Matuskowitz had come in February, 1962, to be in charge of the new building. She is an R.N. and was persuaded to take over the administration on February 24, 1966. Never before had the Home been run by a Matron, Superintendent or Administrator who did not live in the Home, but modern transportation has presented no obstacle to the efficient running of the Home by our dear "Mrs. Mat".

No sooner had the Managers begun to recover from the new building than they were faced, in October, 1963, with a notice from the City of Philadelphia that the open stairways of the old building constituted a hazard. In case of fire, smoke might spread throughout the building. The work of enclosing the stairs, making the entrance doors open outward, etc., was entrusted to J. S. Cornell who worked from Erling Pedersen's old plans revised by George Roberts. In all $24,000 was spent and the building is now safer and much less drafty. At the same time a fire detection system was installed which automatically sounds an alarm and indicates the place of a fire. It has since proved its value in the case of a small fire in a resident's room.

With the opening of the Infirmary, several additional rooms became available in the Main Building and it is now possible for us to accommodate as many as eighty-five residents when the need arises. However, we prefer to maintain a daily census slightly lower than that, in case of unforeseen contingencies.

The various building improvements were completed in 1966, in which year also, Mr. Talbot's untimely death occurred. He was again succeeded by Mr. Churchman as Chairman of the Board, in which capacity he continues to carry on valiantly.

No historical account would be complete without a special reference to the devoted service by our Administrator and her Staff. We are fortunate indeed to have Mrs. Eleanore Matuskowitz who succeeded to the administrative position in 1966 and is meeting so successfully today's complex questions.

The old name "Christ Church Hospital" had long been causing confusion. The Managers have now decided, in spite of Dr. Kearsley's Will, to give him the recognition he so long ago refused. The Institution is now renamed "Kearsley Home" and under that name is about to enter its third century. Let us hope that God will continue to bless this good work as He has done in the past.